

**SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONFERMENT OF THE HONORARY DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF TECHNOLOGY BY CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
AT PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
22 FEBRUARY 2006**

*"ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AS A SOURCE OF STRENGTH IN
NATION BUILDING"*

THE CHANCELLOR, DR. ERIC TAN.

THE VICE CHANCELLOR,
PROFESSOR LANCE TWOMEY

THE HONOURABLE JULIE BISHOP,
REPRESENTING THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA,

THE HONOURABLE FRAN LOGAN,
REPRESENTING THE PREMIER OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

IT IS INDEED A GREAT HONOUR FOR ME TO RECEIVE FROM CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY ITS HIGHEST AWARD, THE DEGREE OF HONORARY DOCTOR OF TECHNOLOGY. I AM VERY TOUCHED BY THE UNIVERSITY'S MAGNANIMITY IN ORGANIZING THIS SPECIAL CEREMONY FOR THE CONFERMENT OF THE DEGREE. I ALSO WISH TO THANK THE CHANCELLOR AND THE VICE-CHANCELLOR FOR GIVING ME THE PRIVILEGE TO DELIVER AN ADDRESS ON THIS OCCASION. I HUMBLY ACCEPT THESE HONOURS AS AN EXPRESSION OF YOUR REGARD NOT ONLY FOR ME BUT ALSO FOR MY COUNTRY. I KNOW THAT CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY ALREADY HAS STRONG LINKS WITH MALAYSIA. I AM VERY HAPPY TO BE IN PERTH ONCE AGAIN BECAUSE THIS CITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A FAVOURED DESTINATION FOR ME AND MY FAMILY.

2. THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA AND THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA HAVE SHARED A LONG HISTORY OF POSITIVE INTERACTIONS FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS. IT BEGAN WITH THE COLOMBO PLAN AND SINCE THEN, MORE THAN 150,000 MALAYSIANS HAVE GRADUATED FROM AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES. TODAY, MORE THAN 30,000 MALAYSIANS STUDENTS CURRENTLY STUDY IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THIS COUNTRY AS WELL AS IN MALAYSIA. WE ACKNOWLEDGE AND APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANT PART PLAYED BY CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN THIS RESPECT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

3. I AM VERY AWARE THAT THE WELL-BEING OF MANKIND, BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE, DEPENDS HEAVILY UPON INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY. I KNOW ALSO THAT CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IS MAKING GREAT STRIDES IN THE FIELD OF INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY, FOR THE GOOD OF AUSTRALIA AS WELL AS THE WORLD AT LARGE.

4. TODAY, HOWEVER, I WISH TO SPEAK TO YOU ON ANOTHER SUBJECT OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE THAT IS NOW AFFECTING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. I AM REFERRING TO THE STATE OF AFFAIRS BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND THE WEST – A RELATIONSHIP CONSISTENTLY THREATENING TO DECLINE AND WHICH MUST CHANGE FOR THE BETTER. IN THAT CONTEXT, I WILL ALSO RELATE TO YOU THE EFFORTS WE ARE MAKING IN MALAYSIA TO ADOPT A FRESH APPROACH IN APPLYING THE TEACHINGS AND TRADITIONS OF ISLAM, IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE PROCESS OF NATION BUILDING, AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO GREATER HARMONY BETWEEN PEOPLES AND CULTURES.

5. I CONSIDER THIS OCCASION A MOST APPROPRIATE TIME FOR ME TO SPEAK ON THIS SUBJECT BECAUSE I AM OF THE VIEW THAT AUSTRALIA AND MALAYSIA ARE WELL PLACED TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE IN THE MATTER OF MANAGING SOCIETIES WHICH ARE RACIALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY DIVERSE. AUSTRALIA IS HOME TO MIGRANTS FROM A LARGE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES. EVEN THE AUSTRALIAN BORN POPULATION HAS DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS. MALAYSIA, AS IS WELL KNOWN, IS A MULTI-RACIAL AND MULTI-RELIGIOUS COUNTRY. I BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT A COUNTRY WHICH CAN ESTABLISH RACIAL HARMONY AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AT THE DOMESTIC LEVEL WILL HAVE GOOD CREDENTIALS TO ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. IN THIS REGARD, I BELIEVE AUSTRALIA AND MALAYSIA HAVE MANY SIMILARITIES AND GOOD TRACK RECORDS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

6. THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION, AND THE ADVANCES IN COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY IN PARTICULAR, HAVE BROUGHT PEOPLES OF THE WORLD SO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER. BUT, THIS INCREASINGLY INTEGRATED WORLD, AT THE SAME TIME, HAS ALSO MADE PEOPLE FEEL AN EVEN GREATER NEED TO DEFEND AND CHAMPION THEIR PARTICULAR BELIEF-SYSTEMS, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES AT ALL COSTS.

7. IT IS INDEED LAMENTABLE THAT IN THIS AGE OF GREAT SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES AND HUGE ADVANCES IN OTHER FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE, WE ARE FACED WITH THE DAUNTING PROSPECT OF HAVING TO DEAL WITH EXTREMIST MOVEMENTS OF ALL SHADES AND BELIEFS. CHRISTIAN, JEWISH, MUSLIM, HINDU AND BUDDHIST EXTREMIST MOVEMENTS HAVE COME TO THE FORE, PUTTING ASIDE DIALOGUE AND PLACING GREATER EMPHASIS ON DIFFERENCE. THEIR

LEADERS SOMETIMES PREACH THE POLITICS OF FEAR AND EVEN HATE TOWARDS OTHERS OF DIFFERENT BELIEFS, VALUES, ORIGINS, CULTURE, LANGUAGE OR COLOUR. WE HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE, AS A RESULT, THAT THERE IS A CERTAIN RESURGENCE OF FEELINGS OF INSECURITY AND ANXIETY WITHIN SOCIETIES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES AND BETWEEN PEOPLES AND CULTURES GLOBALLY.

8. THE CURRENT TURMOIL WHICH HAS EMBROILED MANY COUNTRIES IN EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA IS EXTREMELY DISTURBING. AS WE ALL KNOW, IT WAS TRIGGERED BY A VERY UNFORTUNATE SPATE OF INSENSITIVE ACTS AND GESTURES AGAINST ISLAM BY SOME WESTERN NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS. WE SHOULD NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF RELIGION AS AN IMPERATIVE FOR PEOPLE TO ACT – WITH OR WITHOUT THE GUIDING VOICE OF REASON. IN A SITUATION THAT WAS EXACERBATED BY A NOTION OF RIGHTS, UNCHECKED BY A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY WHICH WOULD GIVE IT MEANING, VOICES CALLING FOR DIALOGUE AND UNDERSTANDING MUST PREVAIL. XENOPHOBIC DIATRIBE SHOULD HAVE NO PLACE IN A CIVILISED WORLD, AND CERTAINLY NO PART IN THE RHETORIC OF LEADERS AND STATESMEN. IT CAN ONLY SERVE TO INCITE AND ANGER.

9. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST NOW RECOGNIZE THAT IT HAS AN URGENT RESPONSIBILITY TO ADDRESS THE STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN WEST AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD BECAUSE CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS MAKE UP MORE THAN HALF OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLE. THERE ARE MORE THAN 2 BILLION CHRISTIANS ACCOUNTING FOR 32% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION WHILE MUSLIMS NUMBER 1.2 BILLION OR 19% OF THE TOTAL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

10. WE IN MALAYSIA ARE PARTICULARLY CONSCIOUS AND CONCERNED ABOUT THE INCREASING RIFT BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND THE WEST BECAUSE MALAYSIA IS AN ISLAMIC COUNTRY WITH AN IMPORTANT NON MUSLIM MINORITY. IN OUR COUNTRY, WE HAVE NEVER TAKEN OUR DIVERSITY FOR GRANTED. INDEED, WE ARE PROUD TO SAY THAT WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY MANAGED OUR RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY WITH CONSCIOUSNESS AND SENSITIVITY. IN MATTERS OF RACE RELATIONS, WE HAVE MANAGED TO MAINTAIN HARMONY BY AN UNWRITTEN CODE OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND ACCOMMODATION. ACTUALLY, WE CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSITY, NOT SIMPLY BECAUSE IT GIVES MALAYSIA A GOOD NAME INTERNATIONALLY AS A WORKING MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY, BUT BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT THIS VERY DIVERSITY IS IN FACT A SOURCE OF OUR STRENGTH.

11. IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MATTERS, IT IS THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT POLICY TO CONSTANTLY PLAN FOR AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH THROUGH AN EVER EXPANDING ECONOMY. THE DISTRIBUTIONAL STRATEGY EMPHASIZES REDUCTION OF ECONOMIC DISPARITIES AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE CORPORATE EQUITY OWNERSHIP OF THE BUMIPUTERA OR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY.

12. IN THE REALM OF POLITICS, WE HAVE ENGENDERED DOMESTIC STABILITY AND NATIONAL UNITY THROUGH A PROCESS OF POWER SHARING. WE HAVE INSTITUTIONALIZED A SYSTEM OF GOVERNING WHICH UPHOLDS THE PRINCIPLE OF DECISION MAKING BY CONSENSUS, AND WHICH ENSURES THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINORITY IN THE GOVERNMENT ARE NEVER MARGINALIZED OR OUTVOTED. WE CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THAT MALAYSIA IS A THRIVING DEMOCRACY, GOVERNED BY A GRAND NATIONAL COALITION OF POLITICAL PARTIES, WHICH HAS BROUGHT GROWTH AND STABILITY FOR THE COUNTRY EVER SINCE MALAYSIA ACHIEVED ITS INDEPENDENCE IN 1957.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

13. THE THREE MAIN ETHNIC GROUPS IN MALAYSIA - THE MALAYS, THE CHINESE AND THE INDIANS - PROFESS DIFFERENT RELIGIONS. THEREFORE, IN MALAYSIA, THE QUESTION OF MANAGING RACE RELATIONS AND MAINTAINING INTER-RELIGIOUS HARMONY IS A PERPETUAL RESPONSIBILITY. WHILE ISLAM IS THE RELIGION OF THE MALAY MAJORITY AND THE OFFICIAL RELIGION OF THE COUNTRY, FREEDOM OF RELIGION IS A RIGHT THAT IS PROTECTED BY OUR CONSTITUTION. IN THIS CONTEXT, I HAVE PERSONALLY SOUGHT TO PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM HADHARI, WHICH WE HAVE DEFINED AS A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANKIND, SOCIETY AND COUNTRY BASED ON THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS AND ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION.

14. THE 10 PRINCIPLES WHICH REPRESENT THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM HADHARI ARE:

- I. FAITH AND PIETY IN ALLAH;
- II. A JUST AND TRUSTWORTHY GOVERNMENT;
- III. A FREE AND INDEPENDENT PEOPLE;
- IV. A VIGOROUS PURSUIT AND MASTERY OF KNOWLEDGE;
- V. BALANCED AND COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;
- VI. A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE PEOPLE;
- VII. THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MINORITY GROUP AND WOMEN;
- VIII. CULTURAL AND MORAL INTEGRITY;
- IX. THE SAFEGUARDING OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT;
- X. STRONG DEFENSE CAPABILITIES

15. IN A WIDER SENSE, ISLAM HADHARI IS ALSO AN APPROACH TO ACHIEVE REFORM AND RENEWAL IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES AND IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES AS A WHOLE. MALAYSIA FEELS COMFORTABLE IN COMMENCING THIS JOURNEY OF REFORM AND RENEWAL BECAUSE THE APPROACH IS EMINENTLY SUITED FOR ADOPTION IN A MULTI-RACIAL AND MULTI-RELIGIOUS COUNTRY LIKE OURS. AS I HAVE ALREADY SAID, WE DO NOT CONSIDER OUR DIVERSITY TO BE A LIABILITY BUT AN ASSET TO BE NURTURED. THE MUTUAL RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE RACES MAKES US A CARING SOCIETY. THE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AMONG THE RELIGIONS WHICH WE PRACTISE MAKES US A COMPASSIONATE PEOPLE.

16. I MUST CLARIFY THAT ISLAM HADHARI IS NOT A NEW RELIGION. IT IS NEITHER AN UNDERTAKING TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE PERCEIVED ISLAMIC THREAT NOR ANY EFFORT TO SEEK APPROVAL FOR A MORE FRIENDLY AND GENTLE IMAGE OF ISLAM. IT IS A WAY FOR APPRECIATING AND PRACTISING THE RELIGION IN THESE MODERN TIMES BUT FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE NOBLE VALUES AND INJUNCTIONS OF ISLAM.

17. ISLAM, AS YOU KNOW, IS NOT JUST A RELIGION BUT A WAY OF LIFE FOR THE MUSLIMS. WE WISH TO MAKE ISLAM HADHARI AN EXAMPLE OF THE WAY MUSLIMS SHOULD RELATE TO THEIR FELLOW MEN ESPECIALLY THOSE OF OTHER RELIGIONS. WE ALSO WANT TO MAKE ISLAM HADHARI THE INSPIRATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF OUR SOCIETY AND COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. IT IS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT THE PROCESS OF NATION BUILDING IN MALAYSIA ACCORDS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO THE PROMOTION AND PRESERVATION OF INTER-ETHNIC AND INTER-FAITH HARMONY. THESE CONSIDERATIONS LIE AT THE CORE OF MALAYSIA'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

18. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME I HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT ISLAM HADHARI IN AUSTRALIA. THE FIRST OCCASION WAS A TALK I GAVE AT THE ASIA SOCIETY IN SYDNEY IN APRIL 2005. I FEEL COMFORTABLE ABOUT SPEAKING ON THIS SUBJECT IN AUSTRALIA BECAUSE I CONSIDER AUSTRALIANS A TOLERANT PEOPLE WILLING TO GIVE OTHERS A HEARING. I ALSO KNOW THAT AUSTRALIA IS AN OPEN COUNTRY WHICH IS COMMITTED TO DEFENDING THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND DEVOTED TO FOSTERING PEACE AND GOODWILL AMONG NATIONS.

19. THAT IS WHY I SAID IN THE BEGINNING OF MY SPEECH TODAY THAT AUSTRALIA IS EMINENTLY QUALIFIED TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE AS A COUNTRY WHICH IS VERY INVOLVED IN HARNESSING THE DYNAMICS OF DIVERSITY, AND MAKING THEM SERVE POSITIVELY THE PROCESS OF NATION BUILDING AND THE PURSUIT OF NATIONAL INTERESTS. AUSTRALIA CAN THEREFORE SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT, AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, FOR A GENUINE TRANSFORMATION IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD. AUSTRALIA CAN HELP BRING AN END TO THE ANIMOSITY AND ANTAGONISMS OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT. AUSTRALIA CAN CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN PEOPLES AND CULTURES.

20. CERTAIN VOICES ADVOCATING MODERATION AND RATIONALITY, BOTH IN THE WEST AND IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD, ARE NOT GIVEN THE PROMINENCE THEY DESERVE. THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SHOULD GIVE MUCH MORE ATTENTION TO THEM. BOTH IN THE WEST AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD, THERE REMAIN AN ABUNDANCE OF WELL-WISHERS, BRIDGE-BUILDERS, COMMUNICATORS AND FACILITATORS WHO GENUINELY WISH TO COME CLOSER TO THE OTHER SIDE AND TO LEARN, WORK AND LIVE TOGETHER. I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE AUSTRALIAN LEADERS AND PEOPLE TO ADD THEIR VOICE TO THIS NOBLE CAUSE. I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE THE AUSTRALIAN MEDIA TO DO THEIR PART IN SUPPORT OF THIS BIG MISSION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

21. WE MUST CORRECT MISCONCEPTIONS AND ERASE SUSPICIONS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD. WE SHOULD PROMOTE A CULTURE OF TOLERANCE BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS. WE MUST CREATE MORE INTER-CIVILIZATIONAL INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE TEACHING OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND CULTURE IN OUR INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING. WE CAN CELEBRATE WORLD RELIGIONS AND CULTURES IN OUR FESTIVALS. WE SHOULD ADOPT A COLLABORATIVE - RATHER THAN A COMPETITIVE - APPROACH TO JOINT SCHOLARSHIP AND OTHER SIMILAR EFFORTS.

22. WE NEED TO FOSTER RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCES WITHIN OUR SOCIETIES. IT IS IMPORTANT HOWEVER TO REALIZE THAT IN EVERY RELIGIOUS TRADITION OF THE WORLD, THERE ARE ALWAYS EXTREMISTS THAT DO NOT REPRESENT THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEACEFUL BELIEVERS. THE GREATEST TRAVESTY IS NOT WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE, CONDEMNED BY ALL FAITHS, IS DONE, BUT WHEN IT IS DONE IN THE NAME OF RELIGION. PLEASE BE CLEAR THAT OSAMA BIN LADEN DOES NOT SPEAK FOR ISLAM.

23. WE MUST NOT ALLOW IRRESPONSIBLE TALK ABOUT AN IMPENDING CLASH BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS TO BECOME A SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY. THE CHALLENGE THAT FACES US NOW IS HOW TO BRING REASONABLE VOICES FROM THE WEST AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD TOGETHER, IN A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE THAT WILL SERVE THE NEEDS OF ALL.

24. HAVING SAID THAT, ALLOW ME TO REPEAT TODAY WHAT I SAID AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN KUALA LUMPUR 12 DAYS AGO – WE CANNOT EXPECT TO CHANGE THE SITUATION BY MERE TALK, DIALOGUE OR EXCHANGING NICETIES ALONE. THE ANIMOSITY AND ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE WESTERN AND ISLAMIC CIVILIZATIONS WILL NOT END FOR SO LONG AS ONE SIDE ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL AND DOMINATE THE OTHER. THERE MUST BE MUTUAL RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER. RECIPROCITY SHOULD BE THE ETHICAL PRINCIPLE THAT CONDITIONS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WEST AND ISLAM. THE WEST SHOULD TREAT ISLAM THE WAY IT WANTS ISLAM TO TREAT THE WEST. BOTH SIDES SHOULD ACCEPT EACH OTHER AS EQUALS. RESPECT, RECIPROCITY AND EQUALITY: THESE ARE THE ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES FOR A HAPPY AND HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO CIVILIZATIONS.

25. I AGREE THAT THIS IS NOT A TIME TO BEMOAN THE INJUSTICES OF THE PAST, TO POINT THE FINGER AT ANYONE, OR TO APPORTION BLAME ON ANY RELIGION. BUT ANY DIALOGUE CAN ONLY BE MEANINGFUL IF IT IS A GENUINE TWO-WAY PROCESS THAT TAKES PLACE IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH IS FAIR, JUST AND EQUAL.

26. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS, BOTH IN THE WEST AND IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD, TO CREATE THAT SITUATION WHERE THE VOICE OF REASON AND HUMANITY CAN PREVAIL OVER THE VOICE OF HATE, BIGOTRY AND IGNORANCE. THAT VOICE WILL BE DIVERSE AND COMPLEX, AND IT WILL SPEAK OF THE COMPLICATIONS OF OUR TIMES. BUT FOR THAT REASON, IT WILL ALSO BE THE MOST HONEST VOICE WE MAY EVER HEAR. INDEED, THIS IS THE TIME TO BE HONEST, RATIONAL AND SINCERE WITH OURSELVES FOR THE GOOD OF OUR OWN GENERATION AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO COME.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

27. I AM CONFIDENT THAT CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY WILL ALSO PLAY ITS PART TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIALOGUE WE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT. I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY GREAT SUCCESS IN ALL ITS ENDEAVOURS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

BEFORE I RESUME MY SEAT, I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA HAS DECIDED TO CONTRIBUTE THE ROYALTY FEE THAT THE UNIVERSITY RECEIVES FROM CURTIN UNIVERSITY MIRI SARAWAK, TOWARDS A FUND WHICH WILL PROVIDE MONEY FOR RESEARCH GRANTS TO POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS. THIS IS INDEED A VERY WELCOME INITIATIVE, WHICH IS VERY MUCH IN TANDEM WITH THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT'S EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL TO DRIVE THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY.

TODAY, I WISH TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA WILL MATCH THE CONTRIBUTION BY CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE AMOUNT OF MALAYSIAN RINGGIT SIX (6) MILLION TO THE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP FUND TO BE CREATED AT CURTIN UNIVERSITY MIRI SARAWAK. THIS FUND WILL BE UTILIZED FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN CURTIN UNIVERSITY MIRI AND CURTIN UNIVERSITY WESTERN AUSTRALIA, AS WELL AS FOR POST-GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS AND POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN BIOTECHNOLOGY.

THANK YOU.